

## Farm Loans Available for Women, Minorities

PORTLAND, Ore. – The USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) recently announced that loan funds are available to help qualified women and minorities buy and operate family-sized farms and ranches.

FSA reserves a portion of its loan and loan guarantee funds each year to assist socially disadvantaged applicants. "Both targeted and non-targeted loan funds can be used to help members of socially disadvantaged groups buy and operate farms," said Larry Frey, FSA's Oregon state executive director.

Frey said that socially disadvantaged groups are those whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of the group without regard to their individual qualities. For the purposes of FSA's loan programs, socially disadvantaged groups are women, American Indians, African Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders.

FSA's loan and loan-guarantee funds are available to individuals and entities that are primarily and directly engaged in farming and ranching on family-sized operations. Farm ownership loan funds are available to help qualified individuals purchase a farm or ranch.

To qualify, the applicant must have participated in the business operation of a farm or ranch for at least three years. For those applicants who have at least one year of experience in managing or operating a farm or ranch, operating loan funds are available to help with the purchase of livestock, machinery, and equipment, as well as annual production expenses.

So far in FY2003, FSA has made 47 loans and loan guarantees to women and minorities in Oregon, totaling more than \$4.5 million.

People who would like more information should contact their nearest USDA service center. These centers are listed in telephone directories under "United States Government, Department of Agriculture." Further details also are available on the Oregon state FSA Web site – [www.fsa.usda.gov/or](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/or).

## OSU Expands High School Education Programs

A new program at Oregon State University called OSU K-12 Online will begin operating this fall, offering high school students across Oregon and the nation a broad cross-section of courses in the language arts, math, and sciences they can take for high school credit.

This is the most ambitious outreach effort to K-12 students in the university's history and one of the most comprehensive in the state. Officials hope it will help fill in the gaps caused by public school cutbacks, budget crunches, crowded schedules, remote locations, and other needs around Oregon.

Within a few years, it will be possible to obtain a complete, accredited high school diploma from OSU K-12 Online, taking courses from some of the state's finest and most experienced teachers.

"OSU has always thought of the state of Oregon as its campus, and this program is a way to broaden our statewide service during a time of severe pressures on our public schools," said Paula Minear, director of enrollment and student services for OSU Extended Campus, the university's

distance education program. "We have a long history of outreach to the K-12 level and this is the next step."

The university already has developed 23 courses for fall 2003, and will have 10 more by January 2004. All the courses have been developed in cooperation with, and approved by, public school District 509J in Corvallis, Ore. Tuition for each course will be \$300. The program begins Sept. 8.

Among courses offered in the first semester are algebra, creative writing, journalism, marine science, American history, psychology, international studies, consumer economics, political science, graphic arts, Spanish, family living, digital imaging, web design, and many others.

The OSU program initially will focus on high school courses. But the first middle school courses should be added by January 2004 and, in future years, elementary courses will be included – mostly of an enrichment nature in such areas as reading, writing, math, or science.

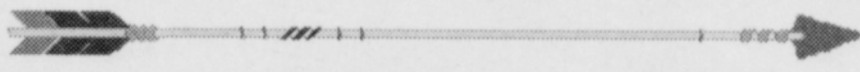
According to Tryna Luton, K-12 outreach coordinator with OSU

Extended Campus, the trend of colleges and other agencies assisting with high school and other K-12 education is gaining momentum across the nation.

"A lot of other universities are already doing much more in this area than Oregon," Luton said. "State universities in Indiana, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Utah already have large outreach programs such as this, and Texas has a major program. Florida has a large 'virtual' school that's not associated with a public university. This is one of the new growth areas in distance education."

The Corvallis public school district has been an integral partner in the development of the new program and all of the courses meet its standards as well as national standards. All teachers will be fully certified and in most cases have decades of experience.

More detail about the courses, schedule, registration, and other information can be found on the Web at [ecampus.oregonstate.edu](http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu), or by calling 1-800-667-1465. Courses are offered in both an 18-week and "fast track" nine-week format.



## Assess Your Forestland Road at Workshops

A two-day Forest Roads Workshop will be held in several Oregon communities to help family forestland owners assess their forest roads. The road assessment process will help determine if they can improve water quality or fish habitat in support of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

Similar voluntary measures were undertaken by the forest industry several years ago and made a significant difference. Besides family forestland owners, the workshop also is appropriate for road and logging contractors, foresters, watershed council employees, volunteers, and others interested in forest roads. Participants will learn how road systems can be improved to better meet forest management goals in a cost-effective manner.

The workshops are co-sponsored by the Oregon State University College of Forestry, the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), the Oregon Watershed

Enhancement Board (OWEB), the Association of Oregon Loggers, and the Committee for Family Forestlands of the Oregon Board of Forestry. OWEB and OFRI provided grant funding for the workshops. Locations include:

Aug. 12-13 – Eugene  
Sept. 9-10 – Medford  
Sept. 16-17 – Prineville

Day one will be a classroom session that describes the importance of quality habitat and how to assess existing roads for problems, maintain and improve forest roads, and develop contracts for project work. Advice also will be provided on locating technical and financial assistance that's available to small woodland owners. An optional evening session – Case Studies from Local Landowners – also will be offered.

Day two will be an all-day field session that consists of a hands-on exercise to assess an existing road and

discuss maintenance and improvement options with the participants. Information about easements and road use issues also may be discussed.

"The information that is going to be provided in this workshop is based on several existing publications: The Forest Road Management Guide Book from the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Oregon Forest Protection Laws, An Illustrated Manual, and some of the current research findings from Oregon State University and other universities," said Jennie Cornell, Outreach Education Extension forester, Oregon State University.

The workshop fee is \$50 per participant. It includes notebook and materials, lunch, and transportation to the field site. Those interested in attending a workshop can register online at <http://outreach.cof.orst.edu/roads/>, or the conference coordinator can be reached at 541-737-2329.